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THE INVESTIGATIVE *Reporter*

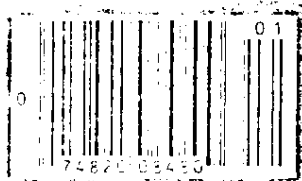
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THE MAN
WAS STON
BY THE BISHOP

More Plots
Against Reagan
Diary of An
ABSCAM Wife
Americas
30000
Polygamists
Whose Side Is
The CIA On
Poland Under
Siege



Whose Side is the CIA on?

The Central Intelligence Agency is up to its old tricks again -- dirty tricks. The boys in the backrooms seem determined to lower themselves to the Soviet level and adopt tactics that in the past have been reserved for terrorists and tyrants. CIA operatives are fomenting world terrorism, which we profess to abhor; they are spreading "disinformation" when the truth would be a far more powerful weapon.

I cannot think of an instance in the last 20 years when a covert CIA operation enhanced our security without damaging our credibility as the world's leading spokesman for freedom and democracy. More likely, the CIA's clandestine stunts embarrassed our country, held us up to global ridicule, played into the hands of our adversaries or invited retaliation in kind.

Consider the litany of CIA fiascoes -- the attempt to invade Cuba with a ragtag refugee force that was easily defeated at the Bay of Pigs; the plot to dose up Fidel Castro so his beard would fall out; the contract with the Mafia to have him knocked off; the scheme to smuggle poisoned toothpaste into Africa to kill left-wing leader Patrice Lumumba; the clandestine military operations in Laos and Iraq, which backfired and ended in the slaughter of mountain tribesmen abandoned by the CIA; the agent who plugged in a lie detector and blew out all the lights in a Singapore hotel; and the bizarre scheme to try to contact dead Soviet agents by seance on the assumption that, since dead, these agents would recognize the errors of their ways and spill their secrets.

These abuses and absurdities finally brought a congressional clampdown on the CIA. No more reckless engineering of coups in other lands, the agency was told, and no more attempts to foment revolutions and to assassinate foreign leaders. But now a conservative backwash threatens to "unleash" the agency again -- a salivating prospect for the "old boy" operatives whose arrested maturation and glandular imaginations were precisely what made "covert" a dirty word and brought on the crack-down.

Not does the mind set of the national

administration offer much hope that it will resist the pressure to unshackle the CIA. Too many in this administration seem oblivious to the menace that poverty, hunger, racism, religious fanaticism and right-wing oppression pose to global stability and, ultimately, to our own security. Instead, they seem obsessed with the notion that the Kremlin, Castro and Qaddafi are the only threats -- and ergo, that any enemy of theirs is a friend of ours.

On the basis of top secret documents I have examined and confidential information I have received from CIA contacts, I can report to you today that the CIA is preparing to join forces with totalitarian regimes and anti-communist factions to carry out covert operations around the world -- operations as bizarre and potentially as counterproductive as those that disgraced the agency and our country in the Sixties and Seventies.

Bill Casey, the doddering director of the CIA, thinks he's found a way to get around restrictions on covert operations abroad and a way to circumvent the law which forbids the CIA from operating in our own country. Casey thinks he can get foreign agents to do the dirty work, with our support.

He argues that the dismantling of U.S. covert capabilities has left Pres-

Casey thinks he can get foreign agents to do our dirty work, with our support.

ident Reagan "with no reasonable option other than increased cooperation with anti-communist forces abroad." A top-secret planning document recommends that "consideration be given to improving the capability of the agency to rapidly escalate aid to anti-communist forces."

That could put our country, the bastion of democracy, in bed with countries and cabals that have nothing more in common with our principles



RAISING HELL!

BY JACK ANDERSON

and traditions than a loathing of communism. It could also leave us with a wide open window of vulnerability.

Libya and Cuba are priority targets, of course, for any new round of covert activities inspired by the CIA. Within the protected corridors of CIA headquarters in McLean, Va., there is whispered speculation about bizarre schemes to do away with Qaddafi. A hit man could pose as one of the Libyan ruler's team of international mercenaries and slip him a delayed-effect poison, for example. There would be no symptoms for the first 48 hours, enough time for the assassin to exit the country. Qaddafi would then come down with symptoms indistinguishable from certain viral diseases; he would become paralyzed, slip into a coma and expire -- without a trace of the poison left in his body.

The CIA got the idea for this poison from the Rumanian secret service, which used it to dispose of some dissidents who had been given asylum in western nations. The assassins were never caught. I have seen the formula for the poison, which could be mixed in many chemical labs; but journalistic responsibility forbids me from publishing details.

The CIA considered using a tiny dart, made up to resemble one of the black flies which infest the desert, as the means

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to administer this poison. Another option was a Borgia ring, which an associate could wear in Qaddafi's presence until there was a chance to squirt the solution in the dictator's food or drink.

A few weeks ago, a report appeared in the press that the CIA was planning a multi-phase operation to destabilize Libya and eventually terminate Qaddafi. Congressional oversight committees were so upset by the report that they sent a letter directly to the president, demanding the operation be cancelled.

The White House and CIA denied there was any such plot against the Libyan ruler. Shortly thereafter a news leak indicated that the real target was Mauritania, not Libya. This caused consternation in Mauritania. Then another news leak offered clarification. The target was not Mauritania, but Mauritius, a small island in the Indian Ocean. No one has yet explained why the CIA was concerned with Mauritius.

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The congressional oversight committee's reaction to the first report reveals, however, that there is still latent concern on Capitol Hill about "rogue" CIA operations. And that concern is shared by bleeding heart liberals and hard-headed conservatives. The first are inclined to condemn all assassinations on moral grounds—a premise ridiculed by the cold warriors in the CIA. But there are astute conservatives who object to covert actions of any kind, and especially assassinations, on strictly pragmatic grounds. They understand that two can play the game. They know Qaddafi has hit teams of his own assassins who could ambush President Reagan in retaliation for any attack upon their leader. In a conversation overheard by our eavesdropping National Security Agency, Qaddafi indeed spoke of assassinating Reagan (See Page 28).

But there is an even more compelling argument against all clandestine efforts to topple foreign regimes. The interests of a democracy are better served by the practice of open diplomacy and statesmanship than by covert scheming, dirty tricks and dubious accessories. For one

thing, covert actions are difficult to coordinate in the decentralized structure of our foreign policy apparatus. In most embassies, the ambassador does not have access to the CIA's code room and cables. He may, therefore, be completely uninformed about covert CIA actions carried out in the country to which he is accredited.

During the hostage crisis in Iran, for example, the students holding the hostages insisted that the United States was plotting against their revolution. State Department negotiators protested with equal vehemence that this was not true. But the students were right. Our negotiators had not been told of CIA undercover operations aimed at overthrowing Ayatollah Khomeini, including appeals to Iranians to "take up arms" against the Khomeini government aired over a secret radio station in Egypt. The CIA also had intermittent contacts with certain Iranian military officers.

When the State Department negotiators learned of these CIA activities, they fired off a scathing memo to National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski denouncing the rationale for the covert actions as "clinically schizophrenic—withdrawn, confused and characterized by bizarre fantasy."

Another of the Carter administration's covert operations recently embarrassed both the Reagan administration and the Israeli government. As I reported in my newspaper column last January, Carter had secretly approved Israeli military aid to the Iranian revolutionary government for its war with Iraq. Such aid was in technical violation of U.S. law, since the equipment was originally supplied to Israel by our country. So when an Israeli cargo plane loaded with equipment crashed in Soviet territory on its way to Iran, both the Reagan administration and the Israeli government tried to deny knowledge of the secret aid. But last month President Carter's press secretary, Jody Powell, confirmed in a television interview that the White House had received reports of the shipments to Iran. The cargo plane's crash and Powell's confirmation of the secret discussions with Israel concerning the transfer of military equipment to Iran did nothing to mend our tattered credibility as a fair dealer in the Middle East.

Though the move to take the wraps off the CIA and let the agency indulge its taste for the covert has strong support within the administration—with Casey strongly backed by Secretary of State

Alexander Haig and National Security Advisor Richard Allen—the damage done to our image when such operations go awry give pause to thoughtful men in the administration. Deputy CIA Director Admiral Bobby Inman is, reportedly, one of those thoughtful, hard-headed conservatives who would like to see the CIA restrict itself, for the most part, to gathering and interpreting information—the agency's historic and primary purpose. Presidential counselor Ed Meese, often called the power behind the Reagan throne, is believed to be leaning toward Inman's view, but has yet to make his position clear.

There is no mistaking CIA boss Casey's view, however. He clearly intends to put his agency back into covert operations, though one step removed, and he doesn't seem concerned about whom the CIA finds to do its dirty work. Yet he must sense the risk, because he doesn't want the American people to know about his plans. Again, a top-secret planning document warns that openness on this score "could panic an American public which has not yet recovered from the Vietnam morning after syndrome."

To shut off the people's right to know, the CIA is trying to close down channels of information, obtain criminal penalties against reporters whose stories might identify CIA operatives and spread "disinformation" to news agencies. The latter is the most disturbing, for this poisons the well from which Americans draw the facts they need to govern themselves.

Jefferson argued two centuries ago that the people's right to know is more important than an official's right to govern—precisely because access to reliable information is so critical to the successful functioning of a democracy. But along comes Bill Casey who wants to misinform the American people in

Carter had secretly approved military aid to the Iranian revolutionary government for its war with Iraq..

order to build public support for political, economic, military and intelligence measures the Reagan administration
(Continued)

tion believes are necessary to counter the Soviet conspiracy.

To get around the prohibition against giving the American people disinformation, the CIA will plant it with foreign news bureaus, whose stories are routinely picked up and printed by U.S. newspapers. Trusted CIA sources have told my associate Ron McRae that the foreign press, in the words of one insider, "is already being manipulated directly." Casey's campaign of deception and distortion has already been launched.

An example is the attempt to discredit Libya's radical ruler, Muammar Qaddafi, whom, one might think, needs no further discrediting. I have called Qaddafi the world's most irresponsible ruler and have backed up this charge with facts that needed no embellishment.

But Casey is determined to overkill, so the CIA is busily creating rumors linking Qaddafi to the slave trade in Mauritania, the only nation that still puts human beings on the auction block, and spreading stories that Qaddafi is manipulating Libyan accounts in international banks and otherwise mismanaging the Libyan people's petrodollars.

The CIA has even considered arranging the disappearance of a moderate Moslem leader after a visit to Libya in order to revive the Moslem world's outrage against Qaddafi that followed the actual disappearance of a holy man named Mousa Sadr. The unfortunate Sadr never returned from Libya after he had a set-to with the dictator.

Such shady strategies are necessary, Casey believes, to stem Soviet encroachments around the world. The danger is that he will emerge from his deliberations one day and, in his brusque way, step firmly onto one of history's banana peels. For the backfire from one of his schemes could again discredit the nation and demoralize the national psyche.

American allies are apprehensive about Casey's intelligence policy. Sources tell me that the first subject raised by the British Prime Minister and German Chancellor in their meetings with President Reagan was our cozying up to South Africa's apartheid regime. The concerns expressed by these two world leaders failed to impress the president, it would seem, because the United States is quietly planning increased military cooperation with the South African government. The rationale is suggested in Secretary of State

Haig has warned that the Soviets are engaged in a "mineral war" with the industrial West, with South Africa's resources at stake.

Haig's warning that the Soviets are now engaged in a "mineral war" with the industrial West, and South Africa's great mineral resources are at stake.

Accordingly, Casey is planning a clandestine U.S. offensive in conjunction with forces that are anathema to every majority-ruled black government. Nor is South Africa the only partner Casey intends to recruit for covert activity. CIA strategists are planning operations in cooperation with Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Pakistan, Guatemala, South Korea and the People's Republic of China, though some of these "partners" are engaged in covert operations that do not always square with our own national interests.

Case in point: In the Middle East, the CIA is working with Israel to disrupt operations by the more radical elements of the Palestine Liberation Organization. But some Israelis in high office would like to broaden the disruption project to target much larger and more moderate factions. The problem here is that these are the very factions the United States would like to persuade to recognize Israel's existence and cooperate in an over-all Middle East peace agreement.

The Israelis, for example, seek to destabilize the regime in Saudi Arabia. Their fears that the wealth and influence of the Saudis could make that country the critical element in an effective Arab alliance against Israel are understandable. Yet we have a critical interest in maintaining the stability of the Saudi regime, because that country not only is allied with the West; it is a key oil supplier and a moderating influence on oil price increases.

According to CIA insiders, the Israelis also have used their access to U.S. intelligence agencies to attempt to persuade policymakers, through disinformation when necessary, that the Arab nations can never be stable, reliable allies of U.S. interests. The policy conflict inherent in the CIA's covert operations partnership with Israel represents a particularly painful paradox, for Israel is not only a long-standing

friend and ally but the only nation in the Middle East that shares our commitment to democratic principles and individual liberty.

No such paradox exists in Guatemala, where the CIA is using Cuban emigre surrogates to train Guatemalan police in such things as the finer points of assassination. The Guatemalan assassins, according to an Amnesty International report confirmed by intelligence sources, get their orders to kill "revolutionary agents" from an office in the presidential palace. Regrettably, the Guatemalan regime apparently, considers almost anyone who opposes or embarrasses the ruling faction to be a "revolutionary agent." Even health workers, who have protested against the distribution of baby food formula that can become toxic when mixed with polluted water, have been killed by these assassins. Some Guatemalan officials, it is reported, have a lucrative interest in the baby food formula business.

Ironically, the CIA sponsored Cuban emigre instructors in Guatemala also are using their expertise in infiltration to infiltrate, not Cuba, but Florida with boatloads of cocaine and marijuana. And unmindful of the lesson we should have learned forever in the Bay of Pigs fiasco, the CIA also is training Cuban emigre commandos. Plans have been discussed to parachute these commandos into Cuba and to use them to harass Cuban economic missions and Cuban intelligence fronts throughout Latin America.

The mindset of the administration does not offer much hope that it will resist the pressure to unshackle the CIA.

In sum, every sign points to a return to the days when CIA covert operations made the agency's initials a synonym for intrigue and imperialism in the Third World, damaged our reputation as the world's leading democracy and held us up to scorn and ridicule.

Under the aegis of William Casey, whose experience in intelligence since World War II OSS days has been mainly limited to reading cloak-and-dagger novels, the CIA is manifesting the same paranoia and hatching the same hare-brained schemes it did in the Sixties and the Seventies. □